



## The Trojan War: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

By Eric H. Cline

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**The Trojan War: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)** By Eric H. Cline

*The Iliad*, Homer's epic tale of the abduction of Helen and the decade-long Trojan War, has fascinated mankind for millennia. Even today, the war inspires countless articles and books, extensive archaeological excavations, movies, television documentaries, even souvenirs and collectibles. But while the ancients themselves believed that the Trojan War took place, scholars of the modern era have sometimes derided it as a piece of fiction.

Combining archaeological data and textual analysis of ancient documents, this Very Short Introduction considers whether or not the war actually took place and whether archaeologists have really discovered the site of ancient Troy. To answer these questions, archaeologist and ancient historian Eric H. Cline examines various written sources, including the works of Homer, the *Epic Cycle* (fragments from other, now-lost Greek epics), classical plays, and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Throughout, the author tests the literary claims against the best modern archaeological evidence, showing for instance that Homer, who lived in the Iron Age, for the most part depicted Bronze Age warfare with accuracy. Cline also tells the engaging story of the archaeologists--Heinrich Schliemann and his successors Wilhelm Dörpfeld, Carl Blegen, and Manfred Korfmann--who found the long-vanished site of Troy through excavations at Hisarlik, Turkey.

Drawing on evidence found at Hisarlik and elsewhere, Cline concludes that a war or wars in the vicinity of Troy probably did take place during the Late Bronze Age, forming the nucleus of a story that was handed down orally for centuries until put into final form by Homer. But Cline suggests that, even allowing that a Trojan War took place, it probably was not fought because of Helen's abduction, though such an incident may have provided the justification for a war actually fought for more compelling economic and political motives.

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Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet

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"A concise, well written, highly informative guide to the legends, the history, and the archaeology of Homer's fabled city."--Trevor Bryce, Honorary Research Consultant, University of Queensland, and Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities

#### About the Author

**Eric H. Cline** is Professor of Classics and Anthropology and chair of the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, as well as director of the Capitol Archaeological Institute at George Washington University. He is Co-Director of the ongoing excavations at Megiddo (biblical Armageddon) in Israel and the author of *Biblical Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction*, winner of the 2011 Biblical Archaeology Society Publication Award for the Best Popular Book on Archaeology.

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